

2035 General Plan Update

Self-Guided Virtual Open House: Desert Rural

Summary Report

From March 5 through April 19, 2021, Long Range Planning provided an opportunity for the public to complete self-guided virtual open house sessions in an effort to further gain input and feedback regarding the draft 2035 General Plan. In particular, “attendees” of the self-guided virtual sessions were guided through a video presentation and polling questions focused on garnering input specific to the Desert Rural Neighborhoods land use proposal – as per the interest and direction of City Council. The city invited attendees, via mail, utilizing GIS mapping to select properties affected by the proposal and to further ensure that participants were those property owners that would be directly affected by such a proposed change. The first section, below, provides an aggregate summary of polling results and summary of key discussion that occurred. The second section details all polling results and comments collected for each individual polling question.

Summary of Self-Guided Open House Results

There were 37 total participants who contributed to both polling questions within the Desert Rural Neighborhoods discussion; however, it was not mandatory to provide written comments related to each of the polling questions, therefore written comment participation fluctuates. This section of the report is an aggregate summary of the polling conducted and includes a synopsis of written responses captured.

Desert Rural Neighborhoods: There has been community discussion, and City Council interest, to include the addition of a new “Desert Rural” Neighborhoods General Plan land use designation for those properties that are currently zoned as R1-130 or R1-190. This proposal would affect both the acreage makeup of land use designations citywide, and potentially the major amendment criteria. Polling questions regarding this proposal included:

- Do you support the creation of a new Desert Rural Land Use designation?
 - Yes – 14 (38%)
 - No – 23 (62%)
- Do you support the land use amendment matrix associated with the creation of a new Desert Rural Land Use Category?
 - Yes – 15 (41%)
 - No – 22 (59%)

The majority of attendees did not support the proposal for the creation of a new “Desert Rural” Neighborhoods General Plan land use designation as well as its inclusion within the General Plan land use amendment matrix showing a change from Desert Rural to all other land use categories, excluding Natural Open Space, as a major General Plan amendment process. Attendees in opposition to the proposal discussed that the new land use category: may negatively affect Scottsdale fiscally as a result of allowing for less potential density to occur; is inequitable when reviewing all of the recent 1 dwelling per acre developments that have occurred in the area; does not properly protect the desert; will negatively affect property values; and, does not account for future housing needs. Those in favor of the proposal stated that they wanted to preserve the desert, lower-density residential, and equestrian-friendly areas as they felt that such attract affluent residents and tourists. Furthermore, those in favor of the proposal stated that this would provide further scrutiny by City Council if future subdivisions within these areas were proposed.

Self-Guided Virtual Open House Polling & Notes

This section of the report provides the individual comments related to the polls that were collected from March 5 through April 19, 2021.

Desert Rural Neighborhoods

37 total participants.

- Do you support the creation of a new Desert Rural Land Use designation?
 - Yes – 14 (38%)
 - No – 23 (62%)
- Would you like to provide any additional comments to your selected response?
 - We recently purchased our older house on 5-acres, in an area of 5-acre parcels, explicitly for the lower density and equestrian-friendly environment. We want that to be preserved for 20+ years.
 - This proposal is a very good first step to stop the endless effort to squeeze living quarters into every square inch of Scottsdale. The proposal will dovetail nicely into the Declaration of Covenants for Pinnacle Peak Ranchos, which is one of the areas being changed to "Rural Neighborhoods". Thank you for all of your efforts in putting this plan together.
 - As more and more developments are approved, we are losing our desert areas. Our desert is precious and that is what makes the Scottsdale area an oasis. Not to mention what will the increase in development cost to our deserts as far as the carbon footprint.
 - This change is necessary to protect large lots which supports our equestrians and attracts affluent residents and tourists, all of which financially support the city. In addition, it preserves Scottsdale's diversity of lifestyle and living options. This land was zoned the way it is for a reason and it should stay that way. Larger lots also better support the goals of the ESLO.
 - Provides recognition of larger lot importance to our optional lifestyles (equestrian and/or large homes with open space)-- Scottsdale cache
 - We purchased this property specifically for its size and uses. We understand that the property in the general area is of similar sizes and zoning and wholeheartedly support the plan that is in place. We definitely DO NOT support a change.
 - There is no public benefit to this change, and it may negatively affect greater Scottsdale area.
 - Please protect the lower density that my present 5-acre lot provides! I built on this parcel over 45 years ago and have seen our most precious natural resource slipping away. Please do what you can to protect the remainder.
 - This provides no financial benefits nor is it environmentally friendly!
 - We currently own lot which is 2.5 acres in a group of individual owners. This proposal makes our land worthless. Other large parcels around us are zoned for 1 house per acre or higher density.
 - We do not support this change in zoning to 3 plus acres per dwelling. It is punitive and will devalue our property. All of the surrounding properties have been approved for one home per acre and we are asking for the same designation be given to our property.

- Here is why I am opposed to this change: There is no public benefit to this change, in fact, this change may be detrimental to greater Scottsdale. The presentation attached does not tell you how many acres are affected, does not talk about the fiscal impacts to the city, it provides very little information and makes this sound like a harmless change. The difference in property tax revenue between 2 homes and 6 homes has not been evaluated with this proposal. I've done my own rough analysis of 10 houses in south Scottsdale on 4 acres vs. 4 houses in middle Scottsdale on 4 acres. Just because the homes are higher value does not result in higher revenue generation for the City, the 10 older homes in south Scottsdale pay more in property tax than the multi-million-dollar homes in middle Scottsdale. Restricting the ability for development of 1 du/ac is reducing potential city revenue. The difference in affordability between 2 homes on 3 acre lots vs. 6 homes on 1 acre lots will reduce the ability for many families to be able to afford living in this area. This density change puts more pressure on middle and south Scottsdale to accommodate families rather than providing housing with opportunity to attend schools in north Scottsdale. Restricting the ability for development of 1 du/ac does not support affordable housing initiatives for the demand for housing. North Scottsdale has infrastructure designed to accommodate 1 dwelling unit per acre, yet the residents who live there wish to prevent others from enjoying these amenities. The street capacity, public pool capacity, school capacity, are all paid for by Scottsdale residents who live in south of Dynamite Road, for the personal enjoyment of those who live north, and who now want to restrict growth by taking away the property rights of others. Take a look at an aerial, notice how many swimming pools (both public and private, including clubs) are located in north Scottsdale. The proposed change does not save desert land, it can all be bladed and developed for large lots with gates and walls. They are not concerned with environmentally sensitive development; they are interested in keeping others from enjoying what they have. Meanwhile, in the remainder of the city, anyone designated "Urban Neighborhood" can look forward to any level of development with more than 8 dwelling units per acre. With no further defined boundaries, this opens up to 40 or 50 or 80 dwelling units per acre, on streets that can't be expanded, with water and sewer pipes that are the oldest in the city, with no additional land for parks or public pools. Rather than creating a tiered density designation that can be supported by the infrastructure, they are proposing further protections for north Scottsdale residents and ignoring the impacts to the areas most affected by change, the rest of the city!
- The proposed change does not save desert land, it can all be bladed and developed for large lots with gates and walls
- We owned a parcel of land off 128th Street for 40 years and originally intended to subdivide and sell 2 pieces so that we could afford to build a retirement home and still live in Scottsdale. Over the years the city changed the zoning and we could no longer afford to build but felt it was our retirement investment. Unfortunately, when we had an offer on the land the city was obtaining the preserve and the value decreased. After years of paying increasing taxes on the land we need to sell and again the city is proposing a change that will affect the value. Unless our property could be excluded from this plan, I will have to oppose it as unfair to current landholders.
- Not needed. Not much land left that falls into this category and we need more housing for our beautiful community. Enough huge homes on 5 acre lots. Terrible use of land and plays into what I call "house lust". I live in a non-gated, more dense area of North Scottsdale and welcome more people to be able to enjoy what that area has to offer. The owners of land should be able to divide into smaller lots if they choose without going through an expensive process.

- The designations make it too easy to increase density without adequate hearings and notification to surrounding areas.
 - This is overly restrictive to growth and property rights. We need to balance some affordable housing in N. Scottsdale. S. Scottsdale can't subsidize the north. This is the same COGS position that disrupted prior General Plans, it's too NIMBY.
 - This is an unnecessary encumbrance placed on our property. If we want to make any kind of change to improve our own property then we have to go through an unfair process that will likely result in a no vote, because of the newly designated rural land designation. The change is clearly made to stop any more development on these properties so the city can manage future changes. This also violates the Private Property Rights Protection Act as it would significantly impact the value of our property in a negative way. This is not an area where a developer can come in and just start putting homes all over the place. These are lots owned by many different people with NAOS restrictions on the land too, making it difficult already to make changes to the property. These areas are single family dwellings where people don't want to subdivide and add more homes to the area...that is why we purchased these properties too. However, we don't want to have unnecessary hoops to go through in the event we want to make changes to our property... we should be treated just like any other land/property owner in Scottsdale. This seems like a redundant law that makes it even harder to manage our own property given setbacks, NAOS, Sonoran Desert rules and now a new designation... not fair! This will definitely lower the value of our home and cause skepticism to new buyers. Not necessary! Other ways to preserve the desert.
 - I own land that is part of proposed designation. Totally supportive of change.
 - How or would this effect an existing detached casita?
- Do you support the land use amendment matrix associated with the creation of a new Desert Rural Land Use Category?
 - Yes – 15 (41%)
 - No – 22 (59%)
 - Would you like to provide any additional comments to your selected response?
 - We recently purchased our older house on 5 acres, in an area of 5-acre parcels, explicitly for the lower density and equestrian-friendly environment. We want that to be preserved for 20+ years.
 - See comments above. It should be difficult to change the makeup and diversity of north Scottsdale and this does that. No one has an entitlement for higher density than the current zoning allows but if a rezoning request has a clear benefit to the city it will be passed. There is a clear benefit to leaving the zoning the way it is.
 - Increasing density/intensity from Desert Rural to other categories should have additional scrutiny from City Council that it has Public Benefit and to ensure it is a good fit/appropriate with the existing neighborhood/area and not a negative impact to their investment, views and lifestyle. Currently approved clustered subdivisions in Rural areas that sites homes on 1/3 and one-quarter acre lots is not Rural and creates significant impact on the character of the area.
 - Same as my previous comment; don't disguise something in the name of an environmental motivation when it likely is not.
 - This is not environmentally friendly nor financially beneficial.

- For large un-subdivided blocks of land only.
- To make this 40-acre parcel in total, Desert Rural Neighborhoods makes it completely out of context with all of the surrounding properties that have been granted 1 acre or less per home.
- Restricting the ability for development of 1 du/ac does not support affordable housing initiatives for the demand for housing.
- The city had granted zoning variances to developers so that they could use land as they want for maximum profit. Individuals who have held this land for years will not have the privilege of asking for that same zoning consideration. We love the open space and that is why we bought out there to begin with, it has already become congested with much traffic passing our property to use the trail. This amendment to the general plan would punish those individuals who own the few remaining parcels.
- Again, we do not need a Desert Rural Land Use Category.
- We are all for preserving the desert that has not been developed...NOT lots that already have homes on them. There are large parcels of vacant land that are not in residential areas and/or connected to them. We think many of those should be preserved and not allow developers to come in and build massive tract homes causing unnecessary density. That type of preservation we agree with... Just because there are some large parcels with homes does not mean those should be impacted. We already have NAOS that protects that land around our home. Please focus on selecting those areas that are truly desert and at risk of being developed into mass tract home neighborhoods... we don't need anymore of those.
- Are there any tax implications to this change?
- This designation should encompass as much area as possible. Development is out of control. The desire for development needs to be balanced with the lifestyle of current residents who are disrupted by construction and whose goals in moving to north Scottsdale have been severely impacted by the increased population density.
- The passage of GP2035 would solidify land use disparity by locking in restrictive zoning so that any change to my zoning entitlements would decrease the value of my land and cause prohibitively great expense to me and my fellow small property owners seeking revision. Its passage would create a financial hardship upon me, and goes against my rights under Arizona State Proposition 207, the "Private Property Rights Protection Act".